

the weight off the sled. But think about that. You have been going for a week. You have been going around the clock pretty much for some of these. You are exhausted. You are freezing cold. Now you are going to jog behind your dogs to lighten the load. This is, again, extraordinary. Many of the others, as they are approaching the end, will keep their strongest dogs, shed the nonessential gear, and switch to a lighter sled to push through on the final stretch.

But there are a lot of different tactics. When a dog is tired, you can put them in the basket so the dog can rest, kind of like a coach on a basketball team: You need to be put on the bench and just kind of take a breather here. We do it with the dogs as well. But this is a race not only about the endurance, but it also is one where there is a great deal of work to ensure that these high-performance athletes are cared for and that their safety is looked after.

Again, if a dog gets too tired and is just not right, mushers can leave them at a checkpoint to ensure their well-being so that they are not pushed too much. Again, putting them in a basket, making sure that the dogs are cared for. There is a veterinarian at every step along the way. The vets check the dogs out at every checkpoint. The mushers have to carry the veterinary check record, if you will.

These vets are not local vets. There are some 50 vets that volunteer to come to Alaska for the Iditarod and go out there along the trail to one of these checkpoints and to do the checks before the race and after the race.

When I was in Anchorage last week, I was visiting with a veterinarian from Colorado. The Presiding Officer probably might even know him. But he comes every year. This was his eighth Iditarod. He volunteers his time because, again, it is an amazing race with amazing K-9 athletes. They are the ones who get the care and attention. I don't know that there are any doctors out along the trail for the mushers, but the dogs are well cared for.

It is required and there is mandatory rest that is taken. Mushers can determine where the 24-hour rest period is taken. There are two 8-hour stops, one along the Yukon River and one at White Mountain, just before you get to Nome. But, again, you think about the demands on the individual as they are mushing along at this pace.

There is a story out of this year's race about a musher. I think it was day 3 into the race. A team comes into the checkpoint. They are clipping right along, but there is no musher. The musher had fallen asleep while standing on the runners of his sled and just kind of fell off his sled.

He had a pretty good team, if I can just say. They were obviously following the trail from teams ahead of them. That team just went on and ended up at the checkpoint there. It was a little while later that another musher came along and saw this musher walking,

following his dog's footprints. He gave him a ride to the next checkpoint where his dogs were all there just waiting for him, saying: You know, we got here first. Where were you?

But it kind of speaks to some of the issues that go on along the trail. There used to be a time, up until this year, when there was no two-way communication devices that were allowed—none at all. So as to your cellphone, you could not have your cellphone with you.

It was designed to make sure you were not gaining unfair advantage in determining where other mushers were ahead of you or behind you. But for safety reasons, I think there is a recognition that being able to send out an alert if you need it is probably wise and important. A thousand miles is a lot of land to cover. There are a lot of things that can go wrong when it is just you and your dogs along the trail.

The news. The news is big about the 45th Iditarod race. This year, the winner, a fabulous gentleman by the name of Mitch Seavey, blasted the overall record—extraordinarily impressive. He set the Iditarod record of 8 days, 3 hours, 40 minutes, and 13 seconds. What is wonderful to add to this story is that this is the fastest time. The next fastest time, the fastest time that we had had up until this year, was the year prior, which was set by his son. Think about that. What athletic competition, what sport can you have a father and a son go in toe to toe beating the all-time record? Last year, the 29-year-old son was the winner. This year, the 57-year-old dad is the winner. And who came in second this year? The son.

When I was at the ceremonial start and I had the opportunity to see Mitch Seavey, I went up to him, and I said: OK, I know everyone is betting on Dallas Seavey to win because it would be win No. 5 for him, but I am going with the old guy.

Fifty-seven is not so old. Mitch Seavey certainly demonstrated that just yesterday.

The Seavey family is Iditarod legend. Dan Seavey, who is Mitch's father, ran the very first Iditarod in 1973, and then some 44 years later, his son Mitch and his grandson Dallas are still going at it. Mitch won in 2004 and in 2013, and his son Dallas won in 2012, 2014, 2015, and 2016—again, a father and son kind of trading off second and third places during each of these.

It is extraordinary when you think about the records that have been broken with this race, and the closeness of the race is exciting to look at. When the second and third place finishers came in—Dallas came in just 5 minutes ahead of the third place musher, Nicolas Petit, who calls Girdwood his hometown, as does one of our young pages here, and it is a place I call home as well.

So there is a lot of excitement with the winners, not only with Mitch Seavey's record-smashing race but also the fact that he is the oldest racer to

win, at 57. Again, as he has reminded us, 57 isn't that old.

I will acknowledge that both Dallas and Nicolas Petit came in breaking last year's record as well.

So for the sixth year in a row, we have had a Seavey champion. You talk about a family of champions, this is pretty amazing. This one is Mitch's third win, and it is an extraordinary win.

I spoke to Mitch not too long ago to offer him my congratulations, and I told him: As a parent of two 20-somethings, I like the command you demonstrate. You have still got it in you. You are going to be a fierce competitor.

But what Mitch told me was really a lovely statement. He said that what was so great was to be at the finish line seeing his son coming in and seeing Dallas genuinely happy at Mitch's win. He said that they were head-to-head competitors all throughout the race, and Dallas didn't make that five-time win that he was hoping for, that so many of us Alaskans were hoping for, but he was so genuinely proud of his father.

As of this afternoon, we have 10 mushers who have crossed the finish line. I wish all of the other mushers and their fearless dogs good luck as they continue to make their way to Nome over the next few days and beyond.

This is an event that I love to celebrate with my colleagues. I love to brag about the amazing men and women, not just the Alaskans but from all over the country and really from all over the world. Our fourth place finisher is from Norway, Joar Leifseth Ulsom. He was right up there all the way to the end. It is men. It is women. Jessie Royer was the first woman in, and she came in fifth place. Aliy Zirkle crossed in eighth place. So they are remarkable men and women—Alaskans, Americans, and people from truly around the globe—who come to compete.

Truly the ones we celebrate with great enthusiasm and gusto are these canine athletes that demonstrate to us all that there is no end, there is no limit to their love to run, their love to compete, and their desire to excel.

I am pleased to be able to celebrate with colleagues from the Senate in recognizing the 45th Iditarod race, the Last Great Race on Earth.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LEE). The Senator from Oklahoma.

#### CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW ACT RESOLUTION

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I want to take the chance to have just a moment to be able to reflect on what the Senate has just completed. We have worked through a process of identifying what is called the Congressional Review Act. Most Americans are not

familiar with this because it is so seldom used. In fact, it has only been used one time before this Congress successfully.

It is a moment for the Congress to be able to look back at regulations that have been promulgated by the administration and say: Was that the intent of the law?

It is something that we have worked at for a long time to be able to get as a frequent part of this national conversation. We call it the REINS Act. It allows Congress to be able to look at each major regulation when it comes out from the administration and ask the simple question: When the regulations are created, are they consistent with the statute? That is what regulations are. No administration can just invent policy and say: We think this is a good thing to do. That is the task of Congress. That is why the Constitution says that all legislative powers shall reside in the Congress, because an administration can't make up the law. It has to come from this body, from the House of Representatives, and then be signed by the President. After that is done, then regulations are created that have to be consistent with the law.

The Congressional Review Act was created years ago to allow Congress to have a second glance at regulations as they are put out and say: Is that consistent with the statute we passed? This Congress has already gone through multiples of those.

In the last 6 months of the Obama administration, many regulations were created. When they were created, they were not consistent with the statute. This Congress has already turned back billions of dollars of regulations from the American people. One of those was done this week. Ironically, it is an issue that deals with unemployment benefits and drug testing.

Many States have requested the ability to be able to do drug testing for unemployment benefits. And this is not a situation where this Congress believes that all people on unemployment benefits need to be drug tested or are unemployed because of drug use—far from it.

In 2012, Congress passed the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act. In that, it allowed States, if they chose to—they don't have to but if they chose to—to do drug testing for benefits eligibility, for unemployment benefits under two circumstances. One of them is if the applicant was terminated from their employment based on the unlawful use of a controlled substance. In other words, if they were just fired from a previous job because they were using drugs, they wouldn't be able to get unemployment benefits because they had already been certified as a drug user. The second one is that if the only available suitable work meant that they had to be drug tested, then they could be drug tested.

What is the design of this? The design of the policy was to encourage people to get back to work. If they were fired from a previous job because

they used drugs, it is a natural thing to say: Before you can get unemployment benefits, we want to make sure you have gotten off drugs since that time period you were fired, or if you will be drug tested for the only job that is available to you in your targeted area, you are not available to be able to take that job if you haven't already had some sort of drug testing.

It is a commonsense measure, and it is given to the States to say to the States: You can choose to do this or not to do this, but if you choose to do it, you can, because unemployment benefits are a partnership between the Federal Government and local States.

We believe this is one tool of many to be able to help people who are trapped in the addiction of drugs to have one more incentive to be able to get off that addiction. Multiple different methods are also used within States to enable them to walk alongside families and individuals and help them get off their substance abuse habits as well.

It is a powerful motivator to say to people: If you want to get some support into your family to help you transition back into a job, the law says that to be on unemployment benefits, you have to be available for work. And if this person is currently addicted to drugs and using drugs, they are not available for work.

This measure was passed in 2012. The Obama administration took 4 years to promulgate the rules off of this commonsense measure, and once they finally promulgated the rules, they created a set of rules so complex, so complicated, with so many exceptions built into it, that the rule meant nothing. It put us in the situation of saying: What Congress passed 4 years ago, we actually wanted that to go into effect to give those States the right to be able to do it.

So this Congress—the House of Representatives overwhelmingly voted and this week the Senate also voted to be able to block out that last-minute regulation from the Obama administration, which they took 4 years to promulgate, and to be able to say to the States: If you choose to do drug testing with someone who was fired from a previous job because of drug use or because the only job available to that person will have drug testing, if you want to help families be able to get off substance abuse and to be able to set this standard for them, you can.

We have an epidemic of drug use in our Nation. We should do everything we can to not only deal with the interdiction of drugs coming into the country but to also deal with abuse of drugs in our country. This is one of those measures, and I am glad my State and other States will again have that opportunity to be able to use this.

#### OKLAHOMA WILDFIRES

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, on January 15, 2017, an incredible ice storm came through my State. For

some States that haven't seen ice storms, they are beautiful, but boy are they destructive. As freezing rain comes down, it lands on power lines, lands on trees, destroys the trees, power lines come down, and it is incredibly difficult for families and for regions when this happens. You can't move. You can't function. You can't travel the streets because they are covered with ice. It is very destructive.

The northwest part of our State experienced an ice storm like that on January 15. That ice storm devastated the Woodward area and all over the northwest—trees, debris, damage, power out for weeks in that area.

Then, in early March, it was starting to warm up. The forecasters from the National Weather Service and the Forest Service saw the forecast coming out of rapidly dropping humidity levels and very high winds, with a lot of debris damage still in the area. It was the perfect storm for wildfires.

They prepositioned assets in that area to be able to respond if they broke out, but on March 6—just a week and a half ago—wildfires broke out all across northwestern Oklahoma. Four large fires in particular broke out simultaneously in multiple areas. Some of them were started by some of those same power lines that were weakened by the ice storm. Now the high winds—60 miles an hour—are taking down those weak power lines, and they are striking the ground and starting a fire spontaneously out in a field.

There were four individual fires across this area covering 315,000 acres just in Oklahoma. One of those fires spread straight across the Kansas border and burned an additional 472,000 acres. To give you a point of reference of how large these fires were, the total fire damage that was done in acres is greater than the entire State of Rhode Island. Twenty homes were destroyed, 3,000 cattle were killed in the field, 6,500 hogs were killed, and 7 people died in the fire.

Let me give you a picture of what we faced in this area as I went out last Friday with Senator INHOFE to tour the area both from the air and on the ground and to talk to farmers and those individuals who are trying to work through this very difficult process. Those farmers and ranchers are facing something you can't even imagine in their fields. For miles, there is no grass. The cattle that did survive the fire had literally no food on their ranch for miles. Hundreds of miles of fence line were taken down. Each mile of fence in Oklahoma, just a simple barbed wire fence, costs about \$10,000, and hundreds of miles of fence line were destroyed.

We have animals that burned alive as they tried to escape the fire. We had deer that, as they were running across the fields, got caught up in the barbed wire fence and 16-mile-per-hour winds, and the 16-mile-an-hour flame caught up with the deer in the fence and burned them alive as they tried to escape.